

## When He Grows Up to be a Comic or Actor by dont\_touch\_my\_cheetos

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**Summary:**

Based off of Bo Burnham's Art is Dead

Richie is using bad humor to cover-up what Bowers has been doing to him, but his mom-jokes are adding to Eddie's current anxieties. He breaks, telling him the things Bowers tells him almost every day. (this dialogue based off the song)

## When He Grows Up to be a Comic or Actor

### Author's Note:

I hope you enjoy this Reddie fic! I really appreciate any notes or suggestions. Also, I have a Tumblr. My username is the same as my ao3.

The week had been hard for Richie. He felt that he should have been ecstatic. He was finally dating Eddie Kaspbrak. He could call him his boyfriend and kiss his freckled face whenever he wanted.

However, Richie wasn't happy. In fact, he was painfully stressed. He'd taken a different way home each day of the week to avoid Bowers and his gang, yet they managed to find him each day.

Every day, Richie ended up at Stan's house, bleeding in his bathroom as Stan took a wet washcloth and cleaned him up. He was the only one Richie would tell considering he'd known Stan longer than any of the other Losers.

Stan promised him that he wouldn't tell Eddie about anything that's been going on. He insisted he should but Richie begged him not to. Richie was insistent that he doesn't want to bother Eddie with his trouble with Bowers, even though Stan tries to reassure him that Eddie would only want to help him.

Richie knows perfectly well why Bowers and his gang are after him. He and Eddie really tried to keep their relationship a secret to everyone but the Losers. Bowers hadn't figured it out, which was the only reason Eddie wasn't bleeding from his temple every day, too. He called him a faggot every day, though. He called Richie a fairy and any other derogatory term he could think of just to make Richie cry once he got away.

To cover up what only Stan knew, Richie became more insufferable than usual. He made more jokes, but it wasn't his usual "it just comes naturally humor" that was often actually funny. Instead, it was forced humor and fake laughs that made Stan cringe.

It made Eddie cringe, too. He was getting more and more frustrated each day but he didn't want to say anything in fear of hurting their new relationship. Instead, he just endured the jokes.

At the end of the week, the Losers met back up at the clubhouse to hang out. Richie was still being a dick to Eddie with no clear explanation for why. Eddie was really getting fed up. He was stressed out enough dealing with his mother. His anxiety levels were rising at the thought of having to hide their relationship and Richie's "I fucked your mom jokes" weren't helping.

Richie just kept feeding his stress and Eddie was heating up quickly. Richie was oblivious to his boyfriend's feelings. Everyone else could see the clear amounts of stress on his face, though.

Bev tried to say something, tried to warn him to stop, but Richie doesn't listen. He keeps going, continuing to anger his boyfriend.

That's when Eddie flipped. He stood up after Richie's last "want me to show you what I showed your mom last night?" Eddie goes off, screaming.

"Stop it!" he yelled, his face turning a deep shade of red. "Stop it, Richie!"

Richie was stunned. His mouth clamped shut immediately. Eddie continued.

"You know what? You're just going to grow up to be some stupid comic or actor and you're going to expect people to stand up and applaud your bad, cringy humor, but they're just applauding the fact that you never fucking matured!"

Tears started streaming down Richie's face when Eddie started screaming. He was quietly mumbling for Eddie to stop. He couldn't listen anymore but he couldn't find it in himself to stand up and get away. Eddie ignored his pleas and continued to rant.

"You'll never grow up and you'll twist people's minds into liking you for it. People will reward you for never understanding or learning anything," Eddie screamed.

All the other Losers sat and watched the interaction before them, transfixed. Richie was full-on crying now. Everyone else was too stunned to say anything. They just watch Eddie rant, red in the face.

Stan was the only one who'd seen Richie cry before. He tried to intervene and stop Eddie. He knew why Eddie was saying this and he wouldn't have blamed him if he didn't know why Richie was making his hurtful jokes.

Richie kept mumbling for Eddie to please stop, and Richie doesn't throw around the p-word very often. He buried his face in his hands as Eddie ignored his pleas and kept ranting.

Even that didn't convince Eddie to stop.

"Not every day can be about you, Richie! There are other people in this world. Stop being such a selfish asshole!" he screamed, finishing his rant.

Eddie told him all the things Bower's gang told him along with mocking him for his sexuality. He quoted the things his mom said one night when she got drunk. He told Richie exactly what Richie thought of himself every night when he's trying to go to sleep.

When Eddie finally finished and took a deep breath, Richie stood and looked Eddie in the eye before immediately running out of the clubhouse and hopping onto his bike.

"Fuck, Eddie!" Stan exclaimed, much to Eddie's confusion. Stan seemed mad at him, even though he was pretty sure Richie deserved everything that just happened. Stan of all people should understand that.

Stan raced out of the clubhouse, but no one dared follow him just yet. They heard his bike skid in the dirt as he rode away to find Richie. Eddie stood there awkwardly, trying to blow off steam. Everyone else stared at him and he was starting to feel uncomfortable. Eddie had always been blunt and snappy, but he had never been this angry and quite honestly mean. They didn't necessarily blame him but they definitely weren't going to pick sides.

Despite Eddie's protest, it was decided that Beverly and Ben would take him to Beverly's aunt's house while Mike and Bill helped Stan find Richie. Ben's presence would calm Eddie down, no doubt.

It wasn't long before Bill and Mike were able to catch up with Stan. They rode together in anxious silence, only speaking to yell out Richie's name and give each other directions.

Stan was getting more and more nervous as the hours dragged on. He knew that Eddie's words hit exactly where they hurt most.

"Come on, Stan. Let's head back to his house and see if he went home while we were searching," Mike said. Stan wanted to protest but he knew Mike's idea was logical.

They crossed the Kissing Bridge on their way to Richie's home when they finally spotted him. He was tucked into the corner of the open barn-looking shelter connected to the bridge. His mop of black hair popped up and down as his body racked with sobs.

Stan immediately hopped off his bike and let it clamber to the ground as he ran to take Richie in his arms. Mike and Bill followed suit as they comforted him together.

Eventually, Richie's tears stopped and he insisted he could head home on his own. Stan wasn't having it, though. He stated clearly that he would not let Richie go home alone and forcibly brought him back to his own place. They rode slowly and stopped every couple of minutes so that Richie could wipe the tears off his lenses.

When the four pulled into Stan's driveway, Stan let his bike fall to the ground again to help Richie off his own bike. Bill and Mike thought it best to leave Richie in Stan's hands and said their goodbyes and the two entered the house as quietly as possible. It wouldn't be any good for anyone if Stan's parents saw and started to ask questions.

Stan sat the unusually quiet boy down in the bathroom and left to get a washcloth. He gently wiped down Richie's face to remove all the dirt and dried tears. The taller boy didn't say anything. He sat patiently and knew better than to try and protest. Stan rubbed his back and whispered reassuring things in his ear: that Eddie still liked

him, he was caught up in the moment, he was having a tough time as is and Richie just went too far, but everything was going to be okay.

At the same time, Beverly and Ben were having limited luck getting Eddie to calm himself. They didn't want to take him back to his own house in fear of Sonia making things worse. Ben tried to talk to him but Eddie just broke instead, all his anger dissipating. Beverly held him as he cried through a massive feeling of guilt.

Eddie started to word-vomit to his two friends. He told them everything that had been sitting on his chest lately. He rambled about his mother and all the anxiety she gives him. He told them about how much he fears she'll find out about their relationship and how he worries if Richie actually likes him or not.

Beverly couldn't stand to hear all the self-doubt that Eddie had to deal with. She made him look up at her as she told him about all the times Richie came over just to tell her how much he adored Eddie. He started to smile a little bit more knowing how long Richie had liked him. She spilled to him the many rants Richie had about how lovely he thought Eddie was. Eddie needed to see him.

Ben was approximately seventy percent of Eddie's impulse control and generally used more common sense during heated situations such as these.

"Eddie, no, let Richie be. You've got to give him some time," he tried to reason.

He knew Ben was right. He understood what Ben was saying but he needed *something*.

"Maybe you should go to Stan's," he suggested. "He might know what's been going on with Richie, anyway."

Ben couldn't get another word in before the shorter boy beside him was jumping up and running to his bike. He rode with intense focus, his tongue poking out the side of his mouth.

When he got there, he knocked vigorously as Stan's door, who opened it cautiously.

“Eddie?” he asked hesitantly.

“I just need to talk, please,” he said with pleading eyes. Stan’s eyebrows furrowed but he opened the door a little wider.

“Now is really not a good time, Eds,” he said but Eddie was not to be rejected.

“I just feel so bad, Stan. I just want to help him. I’ll give him some space but you know him better than anyone. Tell me how to help him.”

Stan finally relented after seeing how desperate Eddie was to make Richie feel better. He let him in and he was silent as he led him to his bedroom. Stan left him sitting on the bed to go to the bathroom where he stayed for an excessive amount of time without explanation.

Richie was still curled up with his back to the bathtub and trying desperately to dry the stream of tears running down his face.

“Eddies here. He’s so upset and he feels guilty, Rich. He feels bad, too.” Richie twitched a little bit at the sound of his boyfriend’s name.

“You don’t have to go out there,” Stan told him. “I won’t tell him you’re here but he should know what’s going on. You’ve got to be honest with him. He deserves that at least.”

Richie shook his head violently.

“You can’t tell him, you just can’t,” Richie pleaded as Stan insisted it would be for the best.

“Richie,” he said with testing eyes. Richie sighed but nodded, knowing Stan probably knew best. He gave in but continued to take shelter in the bathroom.

Stan exited, leaving him to wait it out and let his face return to its normal pale color instead of the current sickening red.

Stan told Eddie everything. He told him how Richie ended up in his bathroom every day with a new bruise or blood leaking from

somewhere on his face. He told him the things Bowers said to him each day and how he wanted to hide it from everyone else. He even told Eddie about the measures he went to hide it from him just to spare him the extra anxiety, which included his especially mean humor.

Eddie started crying once more from all the pent up guilt, hearing the horrible things his boyfriend had to experience. He considered himself a tough nut to crack but he seemed to have an endless amount of tears today.

"Its okay, you didn't know," Stan reassured him but Eddie wasn't having it.

"I didn't mean it. Does he know I didn't mean it?" he said repeatedly. He had just been caught up in the moment and let the little ball of rage and anxiety grow.

As Eddie cried and Stan rubbed his back up and down, Richie finally left the bathroom, wiping his nose with his sleeve. Eddie jumped up as soon as he saw the lanky boy, tackling him in a hug.

"Eddie! Careful!" Stan chastised but Richie just let out a snort.

"I'm not going to break Staniel," he replied, squeezing his boyfriend back.

He lifted Eddie's face up to notice he'd been crying, too. He hugged him closer and buried his face in his hair as Stan quietly left the room to give them their moment.

Eddie dragged him to Stan's bed and pulled him so close that Richie was basically on his lap.

"I'm so, so sorry, 'Chee. Really, I am. I didn't mean it," he apologized. Richie didn't say anything immediately. He just ran his fingers through Eddie's soft hair. Eddie hummed and sniffled and pulled Richie's face down to pepper it with kisses.

"It's okay, Eds. I was being an asshole, anyways," Richie said.

"But I had no idea what was going on," Eddie replied.



Richie nodded and leaned into Eddie's touch more. His tears had run dry so he just stayed still, relaxed in the smaller boy's arms. Eddie leaned back so that he was lying flat on his back and pulled Richie's head onto his chest. They laid there together in silence.

They were both naturally talkative, loud people, but these quiet, sentimental moments were really both of their favorites. It wasn't an awkward silence. They were content to just be in each other's presence as Eddie gently placed kisses on the top of Richie's head. Richie sat up to count the freckles on the other's face while he stared up lovingly at him.

Eddie broke the silence first.

"Rich, you gotta be honest with me. Let me know what's going on. I want to be there for you," he whispered to the curly-haired boy.

"I know you've been stressed recently. I didn't want to make it worse with my own burdens."

Eddie dropped the hand that was in Richie's hair to lift his face up. The look on his face was one of extreme seriousness. Despite his tough exterior, he rarely saw Eddie like this. Lovingly serious, he supposed.

"You are *not* a burden. Never, Richie," he said sternly.

Richie nodded, scared of what would happen if he disagreed.

"Good," he said and pulled Richie back into his chest. He knew that Eddie would always be there for him. He felt secure and hoped Eddie knew he reciprocated the feelings.